

## OUR SOCIAL CHAT

All letters intended for this department should be addressed to "Aunt Jennie," care of The Progressive Farmer, Raleigh, N. C.

### Aunt Jennie's Letter.

It is with pleasure we enroll the name of Mr. Millsaps this week and accept with gratitude his proffered help in our work. His extensive knowledge of human nature which his experience as teacher has given him, enables him to say the right thing at the right time and we hope to have him with us often.

Pansy writes us an interesting letter this week. I think if most husbands realized how humiliating it is to a woman's sensitive nature to be compelled to beg for a portion that she has helped to earn, they would be more lenient with the purse strings and not wait until asked for money but give a weekly or monthly allowance. I know a woman whose husband gives her only one dollar a month to use as she pleases. Just think of it: only twelve dollars a year, but she accomplishes wonders with that small sum. Now she cooks, washes, cares for their two small children, does her sewing and they are happy. His wages are small, and one dollar seems larger than five would to most men, but he gives it joyfully, and she spends it discreetly. None blame the husband of a spendthrift for his seeming penury, but the stinginess of a man with a discreet wife is inexcusable.

We welcome the return of Chatham Girl and wish very much that we could help her in her endeavor to spend all her time both pleasantly and profitably, but how many of us can assert positively that we are enabled to do that for ourselves? It is true that preaching is easier than practicing, but we can say truthfully that there have been but few times in our life when we have felt lonely, so of course we do not appreciate fully your situation. There are innumerable books which could not only be read with pleasure, but much benefit. Of course no young girl is expected to read all the time, but there are so many other things that she can do or must learn to do, that all her time will be occupied if she but stop to plan a little before it overtakes her.

One young lady wishes correspondents, and as Mrs. Ransier is interested in getting up circles of this kind, we take pleasure in referring her to the Sunshine Department of The Progressive Farmer.

AUNT JENNIE.

### The Wife's Pocket-book.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—"Money is the root of all evil" we are told in childhood, and when we reach manhood and womanhood we sometimes realize with a vengeance how much trouble money really does cause. I believe if all the troubles between man and wife were summed up, money matters would be at the bottom of most of them. Courtship has so much romance thrown around it that very little thought is given to practical matters until the "honeymoon" is over, and then it is often too late.

This question: "Who shall carry the pocket-book?" is not new, but women are so independent they are no longer content to take just what the "lords of creation" choose to give them, asking no questions but trying to make it go as far as possible, dreading the time when they will be forced to ask, or beg as is often the case, for more.

There is but one right way to solve this problem: Have one pocket-book, the wife as much liberty to spend that which she has worked for and saved, as the husband.

She should acquaint herself with his business, and if she is a wife in the true sense she will be able to plan and willing, nay, glad, to economize when she sees the money is needed to run his business.

I realize that there is a class of women who would soon bankrupt even a rich husband if given this free hand. Such wives should be given an allowance in proportion to the husband's income.

I think this class of women are rare, however, and most of them could be trusted with the family purse. I have seen men, good men in their way, humiliate their wives shamefully for a few dollars. There are men who keep their families in luxury, yet the wife must coax and beg for every dollar she gets—not that he is stingy; it is "his way." Another class of wives never have the money to pay cash for anything—they get, whatever they want, but must run an account at every store they deal with. The "gude mon" settles the bills without a word, but how much better it would have been for all parties if the wife could have paid cash for everything. Generally the farmer's wife has the egg and butter money for her own—a great advantage over the wife of the man who works for a salary. Parents should raise their girls to know how to earn and spend money, then the man who is so fortunate as to marry such a wife will find her a real "help-meet."

Now, the men may think I am too hard on them, but I write just what I know for a fact. I can cite just such cases as I have mentioned, not one or two, but many. It may look mercenary but every girl should exact that promise, before she promises to marry any man, that she is to have perfect freedom with the pocket-book or she is to have a reasonable allowance.

It will save her many a headache afterward, and the husband will find her always ready to help plan, work and manage to best advantage. I have tried this and know whereof I speak.

PANSY.

Rowan Co., N. C.

### From Another Long-Absent Member.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—It's a very cold, dreary, rainy day for visiting, but knowing the warmth of Aunt Jennie's circle, I make bold to enter in. What and how are the many Chatterers spending these long cold evenings, I wonder? I see several have responded and given plans for spending them. Yet what are we who live in isolated country places who scarcely have a congenial neighbor to do—being, perhaps, the only one of a large family left at the old home? I wish some of the Chatterers would suggest some way for a girl so situated to spend them with pleasure and profit, and by so doing they would greatly benefit me and probably others. My correspondence is my greatest pleasure, and I think you can have an idea of how much I have when you consider that sometimes I do not receive one a week. I'm what might be termed a shut-in, not owing to my health, I'm glad to say, and while I'm deprived of many of the pleasures other young people enjoy, I yet have much to be thankful for.

My! I did not think when I commenced writing that I would write such a blue letter as this, but knowing none ever come asking sympathy and help from the cousins, but that they get it, I therefore venture in, for, as many of you know, it sometimes helps us to tell our troubles.

I'm glad to see the great improvement that has been, and is being, made in The Progressive Farmer. Of the many papers we take, we consider The Farmer one of the best. And as its Editor was raised in a few miles of here, we have somewhat of a "near" feeling for the paper.

And while the many other departments are improving so fast, let us strive, as we never have before, to make the Chat the most interesting part of the paper by writing often nice interesting letters. We can do it if each one will do their part. And can't we have Aunt Jennie's photo to brighten our page? I think all of the cousins would appreciate it. What has become of our Florida cousin who used to write regular-

ly to the Chat? I have a great desire sometime to visit the "Land of Flowers," but fear that desire will never be realized.

If this letter escapes the waste-basket, I may come again and tell the cousins of a trip I made last October to the noted Waccamaw Lake of Columbus County.

With best wishes for Aunt Jennie and all the Chatterers, I am,

Sincerely,

CHATHAM GIRL.

Chatham Co., N. C.

### About the Fireside.

Dear Aunt Jennie:—You do not know me, therefore a short introduction will not be out of place in this, my first letter, for your department. I am a school teacher up in old Iredell. For eight or ten years I was a professional teacher, but now I am a farmer too. You see when one is impressed with the high and noble purpose of "teaching the young idea how to shoot," it is hard to get away from it. It is hard work, and often much vexation is connected with it, yet there is something closely akin to the sublime in the work of the school-room. Having been intimately associated with many hundreds of youths as my pupils, a sense of obligation has taken possession of me in the direction of the moral training of the young. It is this feeling that impresses me to contribute a few lines to your columns, to encourage you in your noble work, and to help some one, if I may, to better employ his or her time, and to encourage the young to practice those virtues which alone can make us an intelligent and happy people.

I consider the family circle as the foundation of our social fabric, and the principles of life fixed in this limited sphere in childhood and youth become our polar star which must direct us amidst the multitudinous and changing scenes of life.

I read your Circle letters and enjoy them very much. I want to add my mite. The question under present discussion, "How to Spend the Evenings at Home," is indeed an important one. Two periods of life are greatly affected by the habits and customs of fireside social life. First, and of present importance, is the pleasure parents and elderly persons may derive from evenings well spent at home, and, secondly, are the opportunities we have for impressing upon the young, by precept and example, those ideas of home which must be important in every breast in order that we may have a land of happy homes and contented people. The love of home is instinct in all the animal creation, in man as well as beast, and it is only when the ideal of home is lacking, or when home is made miserable, that we or our children seek for happiness and pleasure elsewhere. The right kind of home is never dull and never unattractive.

How we should spend our evenings must be determined by the surroundings and conditions of each individual family. What would be suitable for one family might make another miserable. There are, however, a few things common to us all from which both profit and pleasure may be derived. These are reading, conversation, music and simple games. The first three of these should never be wanting, and there are other means of pleasure and enjoyment thinking people may employ, but I consider the above for the average country home (and it is for these I am writing) quite sufficient. The reading should include a select library, two or three newspapers, a few good farm papers, at least one religious paper, and a magazine or two. The moral tone of these should all be wholesome, and, when the children's text-books are included, the time will be quite taken up. The reading should be careful, interspersed with frequent discussions of important events, and with the view of increasing knowledge and developing faculties.

The conversation should be wholesome, free from gossip, and of that free fireside character which would interest every member of the family. The tactful mother should always interest the little ones with infantile stories—but my paper is growing too long.

E. S. MILLSAPS.

Iredell Co., N. C.